

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 17th January 2022

- 1 I have had various representations suggesting that EPC might be the best agency to drive an initiative to mark the forthcoming Jubilee. It is suggested that a street party on Sunday 5th June might be appropriate. It might be worth considering tying this in with Wesley / Elmswell Tavern which would provide benefits both ways; the businesses would make their contribution and, meanwhile, accrue benefit, whilst offering facilities – toilets etc. to make logistics easier. There is considerable advice and support available if Council decides to take this forward.
- 2 I think it does not serve EPC well if it appears that Council does not comment on Planning applications. In order to do so under current arrangements, any application which comes forward outside of our regular meeting timetable must be subject to a request for deferment of the consultation deadline which is not always granted. The Proposal at 14 on the Agenda seeks to allow for this in the specific circumstance outlined.
- 3 I remain concerned about succession planning and the relentless workload within the Clerk's Office. I approached SALC for advice in the hope that they might come and review the situation, but it is beyond their purview. They recommended Messrs HR Services and Council agreed, in June 2021, to engage them. This proved to be an unproductive tail-chasing exercise. SALC were duly informed and recommended a second practice, CBR Solutions. In assessing their feedback and in discussion with the Chairman, it does seem that they lack the specific experience of the T&PC sector and that the estimated cost of £2,000.00 might not be justified. The skills and experience within our number with regard to employment law & practice, business organisation and the present and future pressures on EPC as the village expands suggest another way forward and Agenda item 15 refers.
- 4 On 13th January I co-ordinated a remote meeting between councillors, Ward Members and officers from both BMSDC and SCC to begin the process of thoroughly evaluating the possibility of securing a site for a new primary school in Elmswell so that future pupils are not obliged to travel to Woolpit or beyond to secure their education. Predictions as to school places are necessarily imprecise, but the figures presented are clearly well researched and tested against national standards of assessment. The suggestion from EPC's of a 9 acre site on land owned by SCC / MSDC adjacent to Old Schools Court along School Road, accessed from Church Road, will be investigated in the first instance with regard to the practicalities of designation / re-designation by the 2 councils and I will make the necessary enquiries before the next meeting scheduled for 10th February.
- 5 Our Mid Suffolk Ward Members have made me aware of the current round of bids for their Locality Budget funding. The most appropriate item on the current wish-list might be seen as the provision of blackout blinds in the Wesley chapel. I am engaged in securing quotations for this work. In the meantime, if any Councillor would rather suggest another priority, it can come before Members for a decision.